

Library

With Receipts

revised

**ROTHBURY
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

R E P O R T

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1920.

Rothbury :

SNAITH & Co., Printers, Bridge Street.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30041909>

THE ROTHBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920.

ROTHBURY,

9th March, 1921.

TO THE CHAIRMAN (LORD ARMSTRONG)
AND GENTLEMEN.

Allow me to present you with this, my 24th Annual Report, for the year ending 31st December, 1920.

Your District is a very extensive one, being 27 miles by 16 miles in extent, and embracing 166,959 acres. There are (1911 Census) 1,041 dwelling houses inhabited by 4,606 persons, this being an average of 4·4 persons dwelling in each house. There are large parts of 10 ecclesiastical parishes in it, also 14 places of worship, 17 public elementary schools, and 11 fully-licensed public houses; there are 5 landsale collieries sending some coal away by train. The Tynemouth Waterworks, at Fontburn, now extending to Great Tosson Springs. *For further details see my last Annual Report.*

The Rateable value of your District at March, 1920, was £85,534 for Guardians, with £78,650 for District, and the assessable values £59,952 and £51,539. The amount levied at 1/- in the £ was £2,556 for the District, and for the Guardians (Poor Rate) at 4/2 in the £ was £11,497 for the entire Union—the Rural part being £10,060, and the Urban £1,337. This covers the contribution to the County Rate of £9,266 (for such purposes as the roads, asylums, education, police, etc.) leaving the amount of £2,231 for the local expenses of the Guardians. A Rate of 1d. in the £ provides about £210.

The amounts of your indebtedness are: On the **Workhouse**, built in 1905 for £5,180, and 40 years to run, £1884, paying off annually about £148 of capital and £65 of interest—there being 20 years to run. The **Cemetery** upon a part of the District and conjoint with with the Urban, was formed in 1897 at a cost of £1,580 and 30 years to run; the Rural debt is £247 and there is paid off capital £31, and interest £8/14/0 annually. There are 8 years to run—till 1925. A Rate of 3d. in the £ is required.

At the **Workhouse**, during the year, there were on the registers about an average of 16 persons: 9 males, 5 females, and 1 child. There were also 13 females feeble-minded, young women belonging to Newcastle, and paid for by them. The Casuals numbered 1208 (against 80 last year) being 190 males, 11 females, and 7 children. **Outdoor Relief** was given to 27 persons (18 adults and 9 children) and cost £306. Last year it was 26 persons at a cost of £170.

The number of **Births** that occurred during the year was 99, against 78 of last year, and 66 of the year before. Of 1 the family did not belong to the district, this leaves 98 who did. If we estimate the population at 4,430 this is equal to a rate of 22·2, against 20·0 of last year and for some time, being an increase. That for England & Wales is 25·4, the highest for a long time. These consisted of 45 males, and 53 females, and were born, during the first quarter, 26; second quarter, 18; third quarter, 30; and last quarter, 24. There were 2 illegitimate, and both survived infancy. There were 83·5 per cent. successfully vaccinated, and 91 per cent. last year. In the Districts the chief differences from last year was a great gain in the Alwinton, from 14 of last year to 23 of this. All births should now be at once notified to the County Medical Officer, at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The County Council now employ a lady health and maternity Visitor who resides in Rothbury.

The number of **Deaths** registered in the District was 58, which is at a rate of 13·2; 1 of these was a stranger, leaving 57, while 7 belonging to the District died whilst away from it. This leaves a net total of 64 belonging to the District. This is at a rate of 14·8 per 1,000 per annum, a little over your average of 12·5, while that for

England and Wales is 12·4 being the lowest it has been since 1862; last year yours was only 11·3 with 50 deaths. Of these 64, 33 were males, and 31 females. These occurred each month as follows: January, 6; February, 7; March, 9; April, 6; May, 4; June, 5; July, 2; August, 8; Sept., 5; October, 2; November, 3; and December, 7. They occurred at the following age periods: under 1 year (in infancy), 8; from 1 to 2 years, 0; from 2 to 5 years, 0; from 5 to 15 years, 4; from 15 to 25 years, 1; from 25 to 45 years, 8; from 45 to 65 years, 10; above 65 years, 33. This latter is fully one half of the total of 64 and of these 16 were over 83 years of age—the eldest being 89 years, other 13 were between 70 and 80 years, and 5 more were below 70.

The following table records the estimated population in each of the Ecclesiastical Parishes, or part of them, that are comprised in your District, together with the number of deaths that occurred in them, and the rate based upon such in each of the same;

	Pop D'ths			Rate		Pop D'ths			Rate
Rothbury (Rural part)	1200	23	20·0		Alnham & Brinkburn	330	2	6·0	
Alwinton ...	780	10	12·8		Cambo & Elsdon ...	590	4	6·7	
Whittingham ...	720	13	18·0		Longhorsley and				
Longframlington ...	420	7	16·6		Netherwitton ..	390	5	13·0	

As the rate for the entire District is 14·5 it follows that the heaviest this year was in Rothbury (Rural part) with its rate of 20·0, next Whittingham with 18·0, then Long Framlington with 16·6; credit for the lowest is due to Alnham and Brinkburn with only 6·0, next Cambo and Elsdon with 6·1. Last year Whittingham was the heaviest at 19·4, Longframlington being then only 2·3—increased this year to 16·6.

As the number of Births was 98 and the Deaths 64 it follows that the difference of 34 was the number naturally added to the population; this is at a rate of 7·1 per 1000 of your population, against 6·3 of last year. England and Wales is about 12·0

Of the 98 Children born it appears that 8 died before reaching the age of 1 year (in infancy), being at a rate of 80·1 per 1000 born; last year only 2 died which was at a

rate of 26·0 per 1000 born. Your average is about 75·0. That for England and Wales is 80·0, the lowest ever recorded. The causes of these deaths were : Heart Disease, 1 ; Bronchitis, 1 ; Premature Birth and Malformations, 3 ; Gastritis, 2 ; Convulsions, 1. These were distributed equally throughout your District. There were born out of wedlock, 2, against 7 of last year, and these survived their infancy.

Under the class of diseases previously regarded as the **Zymotic** or **Epidemic** and Infectious diseases there was only 1 death, it being due to Measles, in a lad aged 16 years in the Alwinton district (Milkhope). This is at a low rate of only 0·23 ; your average being 0·6. **Influenza** caused 1 death in the District and another in a resident whilst absent from the District. **Pneumonia**, so often associated with influenza, caused 2 deaths in residents, and 1 death in a stranger. Last year these two latter diseases caused 11 deaths, against 4 this year.

Phthisis (Tubercular disease of the lungs) caused 2 deaths in your District, and 1 death in a resident whilst outside the District, being 3 deaths in all. This is at a rate of 0·7, against 0·45 of last year ; your average of 0·82 for the previous twelve years. The rate for England and Wales is about 1·12. These deaths were males 2, females 1, and are referable to the Rothbury, Alwinton and Whittingham Districts—1 in each. Visits were made and instructions given, also asked to disinfect the rooms occupied.

Tubercular Disease in other parts of the body caused 4 deaths, being at a rate of 0·9 ; these occurred in males 1, females 3. The disease was in the bowels in three cases, and in the spine in one case. Two cases went to the Infirmary for treatment.

Cancer was the cause of 4 deaths, being at a rate of 0·91. Last year there were 5 deaths from this disease ; in the previous fourteen years there were 48 deaths, an average of almost 4. These were equally distributed, 2 males and 2 females ; three were internal and one on the face (external). All were over 65 years of age—two being over 80. I advised disinfection of the rooms, etc. This appears to be a little on the increase.

Meningitis (not tubercular) caused 3 deaths, two being in persons of 5 years and one 43 years, possibly complications of influenza. These deaths occurred in different parts of the District. **Organic Heart Disease** caused 9 deaths (against 8 of last year) an average of 9. One was congenital, being in a child of under 1 year old, and four were over 65 years of age. **Bronchitis** caused 1 death, an infant aged one month. **Pneumonia** caused 3 deaths in persons between the ages of 45 and 65 years; all were males, and one is the stranger previously referred to as having died in the District; Influenza may have been the primary cause, as this was found to be so in same cases. One died of **Empyœma**, this making 5 deaths in all due to diseases of the chest, other than Phthisis, and is at a rate of 1.12. **Nephritis** caused 7 deaths, five being in persons over 65 years of age. **Premature Birth** and **Malformations** caused 3 deaths. There were no deaths from violence. **Apoplexy** caused 5 deaths. **Senile Decay** caused 11 deaths. **Other defined diseases** caused 8 deaths, three of these being infants.

Of your own residents who died whilst away from the District there were 7. The causes of these deaths were: Phthisis, 1, at the County Asylum, a male aged 49; 2 of other forms of Tubercular Disease, both females, at Newcastle, aged 31 and 36 years, the bowels being affected. Influenza caused 2 deaths, both males. Apoplexy caused 1, and Nephritis caused 1. There was one Stranger who died in your District (at Alwinton) a male, aged 48 years, belonging to Cornhill, of Pneumonia.

The only Institution in your District is the con-joint **Hospital for Infectious Diseases**. There were none admitted during the year into it. There are three beds for Small Pox cases in the old part, and 8 beds for other diseases, in the new.

The **Workhouse** is in the Urban District, (see p. 2) there was one death, a male aged 60 years, of apoplexy.

The **Cottage Hospital**, also in the Urban District, had nine patient belonging to the Union admitted, with 1 death (Urban). There being also 39 Convalescents from outside the District.

Under the **Notification of Infectious Diseases Act** (excluding Measles), there were notified 22 of the usual type, including 13 of Scarlet Fever, 7 of Diphtheria and 2 of Erysipelas. Of the 13 cases of **Scarlet Fever** 7 were males and 6 females; two were under 5 years of age, and 11 were over that age. There were no deaths. The first case occurred in a boy, aged 12 years, at Harbottle Peels, on September 13th. On visiting I found he had been away on August 15th visiting near Gateshead, he returned on August 21th, and took ill on September 7th. As soon as the symptoms were recognised the boy was isolated. Another person in this house was affected, and the disease spread to Harbottle (two families), making a total of 5 cases in all. Instructions were given and isolation and disinfection carried out; the places being also disinfected afterwards. The next case was at Thrunton, on visiting the first case here affected, a girl aged 6 years was ill with sore throat on Sept. 28th, and doubtless had Scarlet Fever—it being a very vague case. On October 28th a lad at Whittingham—near by—took it, on inspection there were no unsanitary conditions found, and the disease did not spread further, care having been taken. It broke out at Elilaw in a girl, aged 13 years, on October 30th, but no trace of infection could be found here; on visiting a blocked drain was found which was after notice, opened out; there were four other persons in this cottage affected, and it spread to one at Netherton making a total of 6. These houses were afterwards disinfected. Of the **Diphtheria** the first case occurred at Little Ryle in a boy, aged 13 years, on March 25th, there was a suspicion of infection, and on visiting a small nuisance was rectified under your Inspector. A case occurred at Harbottle in a male aged 31 years; on visiting we found that he had been opening a blocked drain on June 11th, and took ill with sore throat, etc., on June 12th. Eventually the whole household, five persons, took it. Isolation and disinfectants were used as far as practicable, the disease did not spread any further. At Harbottle Castle a maidservant, aged 23 years, came from the colliery district on September 28th, having formerly and lately had a sore throat, on October 16th she had a relapse and was found to have Diphtheria, she was then isolated; all care taken and disinfectants used the disease did not spread. Thus there were 7 cases in all, three males and four females—two being under five years of age and five over that age. **Erysipelas** was notified in 2 cases, one male and one female, and both cases on the

face, the ages being 18 and 33 years. **Measles** was not adopted as compulsorily notifiable by your Board. The very extensive outbreak of last year, now passing away was not quite ended. It was necessary to extend the Christmas Holidays at Longframlington schools until January 19th. At Whittingham the schools were closed from January 5th till 26th; Wingates the same dates; Hepple till January 12th; Thropton from January 23rd for three weeks; and at Alnham from February 1st for three weeks. A child went from this latter district to the Kidland Lee, there took measles and caused the closure of the school. There is reason to believe that from this family it was carried to the Dance at Harbottle, on February 13th, where three people took it ten days or so afterwards, and a lad, aged 16 years, died of it at Milkhope on February 25th. This was practically the end of this extensive outbreak of measles which lasted fifteen months and invaded every part of your District. The fact of the infection being at its height before the rash appeared on the third to fourth day made it very difficult to isolate the first cases.

The **Influenza** is never really away from us now, it simmers down into a mild type, and then amongst little protected, and for some climatic reason it flies up again more or less periodically. In severe attacks bronchitis and pneumonia are apt to complicate it, also head and bowel troubles, with weakness of the heart afterwards. It was not extensively marked this year as violent, but kept occurring from time to time. It caused the death of male, aged 59, whilst visiting at Rothbury, being unwell. For further remarks see last Annual Report.

Pneumonia caused two deaths, both males, in March. There were no other cases certified. It is often associated with the influenza.

Phthisis (tubercular disease of the lungs) was notified in three cases, one a male—a joiner—aged 28 years, returned from the Army to his work at Alnwick, breaking down, and bacteria being found in sputum, he came to his home at Clennell, Here we visited and found a scullery waste pipe unsanitary, it has been rectified. The disease is in the family. All care has been taken, and he is improving. Another male—a hind—aged 18 years, developed it at Netherton Burn Foot, on visiting we

found great overcrowding with visitors, this was rectified. The lad had pneumonia; bacteria were found. The third case was a male who came from Huddersfield Sanatorium to Thropton, on December 18th, an ex-army man. Instructions were given. He was very ill, and died shortly after the New Year. There are two other cases under treatment in the District, in improving health, and taking precautions.

Of other **Tubercular affections** there was only 1 notified, in a male aged 42 years, of the spine; he died at Snitter Mill.

Ophthalmia was notified in an infant at Harbottle, which soon recovered.

No animals were reported to me as being tubercular.

Bacteriological Examinations were made in twenty-eight specimens sent from your District for examination to the County Analyst, which related to twenty-three persons, they were certified as Positive in eight specimens, and Negative in twenty. These were needed in eight cases of suspected Phthisis, two being found positive, and six negative. In twenty cases of suspected Diphtheria six were positive (four persons), and fourteen negative.

The returns notified to me are regularly transmitted to the Ministry of Health, and the County Medical Officer of Health, by law.

Proceedings were taken before the Magistrates, in the case of a blocked drain, but failed on technical points

28. Under the **Factory and Workshops Act** there are four Factories which include 2 Saw Mills, 1 Flour Mill and 1 Woollen Manufactory, There are also Whinstone Works and Quarry at Ritton White House employing about 30 men, the main seam being about 68-feet deep; a good many houses here are empty, men cannot be had. There are 28 so-called workshops on my list which include 8 Blacksmiths, 4 Tailors, 4 Shoemakers, 6 Joiners, 5 Dress-makers, 1 Milliner. There are no Underground Bakeries, and no outworkers. The wood privy at Thropton has

been demolished, and a good stone privy midden erected in its place. At Whittingham and the Peels the Blacksmiths have limewashed after notice. We made forty visits.

Under the **Dairy and Cowsheds Act** there are only two who sell Milk in large quantity in your District (over 8 gallon daily). At **Snitter Back Lane** where 14 cows are kept, supplying about 75 quarts, chiefly to Rothbury. And **Walk Low Hall** with 8 cows sends in about 20 quarts. The utensils are kept clean, and the premises are well drained; light and air ventilation and water supply are all in good order, and limewashed. At Longframlington one sells a fair quantity, and the premises are in fairly good order; others sell small quantities, keeping only one or two cows, they are not too well kept and are not registered. The farmers also in some cases allow their Hinds, &c., to have a little milk. All cows are let out in the fields whenever the weather will permit. There are no Dairies, all the milk being sold directly upon milking or sent out. Anderson's byre needs attention structurally, &c. I have not heard of any cows being tubercular, nor any mothers asking to be supplied with milk. There is not always the statutory 600 cubic feet, or 50 superficial feet, provided for each cow. About twenty visits have been made.

The **Slaughter-house** at Whittingham is kept clean, drained and limewashed, and has good water supply. There was no tubercular or unsound meat exposed for sale. There is no special Meat Inspector.

The **Elementary Schools** in your District number seventeen, with accommodation for 1023 children. The number upon the books for the year was 601 against 597 of the former year. A great improvement was effected at Windyhaugh in piping the water from the spring channel to the school and house also unblocking the drain. At Fontburn the outoffices are to receive needed attention. School closure to arrest the spread of measles was required in the early part of the year at the following: Longframlington, Whittingham, Alnham, Thropton, Kidland Lee, Wingates and Hepple. At Bilsmoor a school house is to be provided.

The Public Water Supplies. At Longframlington after much attention on the part of your Inspector the source of a large leak has been found and rectified; this had occasioned a shortage at Harrogate House. Other water wastes and defective washers have been rectified. The Old Pit Cottages need water laid on; these are private property. At Harbottle the Camp is now quite evacuated, and the branch water supply cut off; better protection of the Tank is needed here, The Fontburn reservoir is full and running over, this belongs the Tyne-mouth Corporation. This body is now taking away a large part of Tosson Springs and all the springs on their route. This should be watched.

The Public Sewers exist at Thropton, Snitter, Elsdon, Netherton, Harbottle and Longframlington, at the latter place a block was rectified, otherwise all seems in order. Of private drains at **Healycote** attention is needed as for two houses at Sharperton. At Longframlington Post Office a new one has been laid. A long new one has been laid at Whitton into the Urban Sewer.

Under the **Housing of the Working Classes Act** the inspection was completely carried out in 1913, and fully reported upon in 1914. Under the 1911 standard—that houses having over an average of two persons per room were overcrowded—there are 102 such houses in your District. These are under the £16 a year rental. Five new wooden houses have been built at the **Lee Siding** for the workmen at the Lee Colliery, their sanitary arrangements will need watching not being good. A wood hut has been built at **Whitton** for the Tyne-mouth Pipe Track Workers to hold forty persons in separate iron beds, being untidily kept and with other unsanitary conditions existing; the Agent has had his attention called to this. A wood hut has been erected for the County Council Road Menders at the **Black Burn**, it is quite temporary, and off the roadside. Also one at Healy Cote, a good structure of non-permanent type. Also two at the **Follions**, for ten to twelve workers at the Quarry there, this is in good order. An excellent one on brick foundations has been built by the N. B. R. Co., near the Thrum Cutting, for one of their workmen, it has three bedrooms, living room, bathroom, scullery and w.c., with water and drainage, all in good sanitary order. At the **Garret Lee** an old empty house has been restored

and raised a storey and is now in good condition ; your Board did this at your Surveyor's advice and attention, for one of your workmen. Also at **Bilsmoor** a nice wooden house has been erected for the Schoolmistress to live in. At the **Hesleyhirst**, for the Lee Colliery, two wooden ones well-built, with bath and every convenience. At **Fairhaugh** a stone and slate roof house has been practically re-built and a new storey added and all sanitary requirements. At **Callaly** the Laundry is being converted into two cottages.

Your Council have not formed any Housing Scheme, and the Ministry of Health, after due enquiry, are also satisfied that there is no urgent need.

Under the **House Inspection Act**, also completed in 1913, great improvements have been made at South Yardhope and at Fairhaugh and Garrett Lee, these were all badly classed under this inspection. Originally there were 24 houses considered by us as unfit to occupy and now this number is reduced to only 7, and some of these are promised to be taken in hand. There are now left 22 houses needing some amount of sanitary attention as well as the above.

Special Inspections were made Whittingham, with little to remark about ; also at Ritton White House there are 12 houses empty for want of men to work, some of these are getting into bad condition.

Improvements have been effected as mentioned above, and also at Elsdon (Bird & Bush Inn) a cow byre built between two houses, re-roofed, cemented, spouted & drained ; Cross Hill, cottages improved ; Whitton, a large stone-built house practically re-built, with all arrange- in order ; at Longframlington, Elliott's Farm spouted buildings, and yards cemented ; Rothley East Shield, nuisance abated and some better protection to the water supply ; Thropton, two new stone privy middens long needed ; Whitburn Shank and Windyhaugh, schools have had the water piped to place.

Requirements, as reported above, also at Healy Cote the drain requires attention ; Wholope, sanitary arrangements and more living accommodation ; Burradon a sanitary drain, and unsanitary privy ash middens

rectified, also pigstyes need attention ; Elsdon, Church Gate Cottage sanitary improvements ; Alnham, (Tait's) a smoke nuisance complaint. The water supply at North Yardhope complained of, found good during damp season but requires to be watched during dry weather. Nether-ton Mill, some structural defects.

Your Inspector regularly goes over portions of the District, reporting to the Board each meeting, and has given attention to all the above.

I am indebted to the late Mr. Hudson, of Cragside, for the following particulars concerning Rainfall, etc., taken at Cragside, 405 feet above the sea level :—

		Rainfall in inches	Number of Wet Days	Hours of Sunshine
January	..	2·73	20	62
February	...	1·73	9	117
March	..	2·75	13	171
April	...	3·42	19	138
May	3·56	14	227
June	0·99	7	210
July	3·45	15	109
August	...	2·69	9	136
September	...	1·41	10	119
October	...	2·31	8	73
November	...	1·09	6	66
December	...	6·16	24	28
TOTAL ..		32·29	154	1461

The rainfall is about your average, for the last 25 years it is 32·71 inches. It was a fairly dry year until December which was very wet. The number of wet days was less than the average of 170, and hours of sunshine a little more than the average of 1423 hours, but were very little at the latter part of the year,

Your obedient servant,

F. BARROW,

Medical Officer of Health